Useful Heat Value (UHV) to the international practice of pricing coal based on Gross Calorific Value (GCV). This is expected to encourage efficient use and promote use of washed coal.

8. Amend the provisions of Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970 to facilitate offloading of certain activities in coal mining for improved economics of operations.
9. Replace coal linkages with fuel supply agreements.
10. Promote *in situ* coal gasification and tapping of coal bed methane.
11. Rationalise rail freight rates for coal transport.
12. Extend infrastructure status to the coal industry. Lower duties on capital goods imported for coal mines.
13. Institute an independent regulatory mechanism for the coal sector.
14. Review the royalty on coal and consider switching to an *ad-valorem* basis.

Auction of coal through internet

†414. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have commenced auctioning of coal through internet;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether small and medium entrepreneurs have asked Government to stop the auctioning process of coal through internet with immediate effect; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction and decision thereon in view of their demand?

THE MINISTER OF COAL (SHRI SHIBU SOREN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The sale of coal through E-marketing was introduced consequent upon the judgement given by the Hon'ble High Court of Kolkata. This scheme aims to curb the black marketing of coal and provide coal to those consumers who have not been getting coal due to absence of

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

linkage or due to quantity under linkage being inadequate through a transparent manner.

(c) and (d) Some of the consumers have made requests to stop the auctioning process. They have also preferred various writ petitions which are presently under adjudication before the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The sale of coal through e-marketing is continuing based on the encouraging reports on the performance of this scheme.

Production and demand of coal

†415. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the gap between production and demand of coal at present in the country;

(b) the steps Government have taken to fulfill the gap;

(c) whether Government have formulated any contingency plan for coal production;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the extent by which the production of coal would be increased by the same and by when;

(e) whether it is a fact that coal mafia are engaged in coal exploration from several coal mines illegally; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the steps Government have taken to prevent the same?

THE MINISTER OF COAL (SHRI SHIBU SOREN): (a) and (b) Planning Commission has estimated coal demand of 445.65 million tonnes during the year 2005-06. This demand is planned to be met from domestic supply of 406.48 million tonnes. With proposed imports of 23.89 million tonnes of coking coal for steel sector and 13.45 million tonnes of non-coking coal for power utilities, there will be small gap in coal availability which will be met from enhanced production from indigenous sources.

(c) and (d) Government has drawn an emergency coal production plan in the subsidiary companies of Coal India Limited. 16 open cast projects/mines have been identified where production from the existing mines/projects can be enhanced to a higher level, yielding additional 71.13

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